

ESSAY

ON

The NATURE and FOUNDATION

OF

MORAL VIRTUE

AND

OBLIGATION;

BEING

A Short INTRODUCTION

To the STUDY of

ETHICS;

For the Use of the STUDENTS of YALE-COLLEGE.

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T H E
P R E F A C E.

SINCE the Study of Ethics makes so great a Part of an academical Education, and there are Professors of that Science in most of the Universities in Great-Britain, I have, for many Years past, been in Quest of some System of that Kind, proper to be recited by the Students; but can find none well adapted to that Purpose. For though there are many Treatises which contain good Rules of external Conduct, yet the Obligation to act according to those Rules, is not justly stated; and several insufficient and false Foundations are laid down by Authors of considerable Note.

It seems necessary that the Students should first be well instructed in the true Nature of moral Virtue, and the Foundation of our Obligations to practise it, before they read the practical Rules which are formed thereupon,

As this Treatise was designed, principally, for the Use of the Students of this College, I have, to save the Charge of Printing, wrote in as concise

a Manner, as can be intelligible, on such a critical and metaphysical Subject. If any Expressions should seem doubtful, I may be present to explain and enlarge upon them: And if this should happen to fall into the Hands of any Gentleman at a Distance, who should suppose that any Expression is capable of such a Construction, as is not consistent with Truth, I would ask the Favour of an Opportunity to explain myself.

In treating upon the divine Ideas, I have generally follow'd the Sentiments and Expressions in Norris's Ideal World.

As this Treatise contains only short Hints or Heads to be paraphras'd upon, but few Copies are printed at present; proposing that if God should spare my Life, and give me some Relaxation from my present Multiplicity of Business, to publish a more full and complete Treatise upon this Subject, which I look upon to be of great Importance, because it contains the moral Part of all true Religion, which is the Foundation of the Whole: Tho' no fallen Creature can become truly virtuous, but in Consequence of an Atonement, and the renovating Influences of the divine Spirit: And I suppose that Men generally form their Sentiments of the peculiar Doctrines of Christianity, according to some few moral Principles, which they at first set out upon, relating to the Holiness and Strictness of the divine Law, and the Nature of moral Obligation.

2 JY 61

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ESSAY, &c.

§ I.



S Ethics or Moral Philosophy, makes a considerable Part of an academical Education, and is nearly connected with true Religion, it is of great Importance that it should be *clearly stated*, and fixed upon the right *Foundation*. --- Authors are generally agreed in the Rules of external Conduct, for the general Good of Communities and particular Persons ; but differ greatly in the *Foundation* of the *Obligation* to observe those Rules, and in the *Criterion of moral Good and Evil*. Most Authors have treated upon *Ethics* as a System of *moral Rules* of Conduct, summarily comprehended in the ten Commandments ; and as the moral Part of practical Religion : But then the separating of this from the Doctrines or Principles of Religion, upon which it is founded, has been the Occasion of several Mistakes ;

Mistakes ; and particularly this, that many have treated *Ethics* only as the Laws of Nature and Nations, or a System of *civil Laws*, generally obtaining among Mankind, and calculated principally to promote the temporal Good of public Communities and particular Persons, in their enjoying the natural Pleasures and Happiness of the present Life. Others have, as it were, partly blended both these together, and from thence have formed a System of what they call the *Religion of Nature*, whereby every Man may obtain the Favour of God and eternal Happiness, by his own Powers, without a Mediator or any divine Revelation. *Ethics*, in this View, have very much paved the Way to Deism ; and therefore have been justly opposed by many good Men.(x)

§ 2. And as Men have had very different Views of the ultimate End and Design of *Ethics* ; so they have set out upon very different *Grounds* and *Foundations*, to build their several Systems upon ; Some upon the Foundation of *Self-Interest* and Happiness ; some upon universal *Benevolence*, and some upon *moral Taste* ; and others upon various other first Principles, which are either false, or but consequential Appendages to the true Foundation. To rectify these Mistakes, and to settle the Nature of *moral Virtue* and *Obligation* upon its just and true Foundation, is the Design of the present Essay.

§ 3.

(x) Dr. C. MATHER (in his *Introductio ad Ministerium*) calls it *Impietas in Artis Formam redacta*.

§ 3. And, therefore,

First, I shall consider the Nature and Standard of moral Virtue.

Secondly, The Obligation, which every moral Agent is under, to be conformed to that Standard.

Thirdly, The Way whereby we may come to the Knowledge of that Standard, and of such a Temper and Conduct as is a Conformity to it.

Lastly, I shall exhibit a brief and general Scheme of moral Virtues and Duties.

First, I shall consider the Nature and Standard of moral Virtue.

Moral Virtue is a Conformity to the *moral Perfections of God*; or it is an Imitation of God, in the moral Perfections of his Nature, so far as they are imitable by his Creatures. And the moral Perfections of God are the *sole* Foundation and Standard of all that Virtue, Goodness and Perfection which can exist in the Creature.

§ 4. For God is a being infinitely and absolutely perfect. He has all those Perfections which are contained or implied in the Words *good, right, excellent, amiable*, and all other Words of the like Import---all those Perfections which can possibly exist, or that can be conceived of by the most perfect Intelligent: For there can be no Limitation of Perfection in a necessary and *self-existent* Being.

§ 5. Indeed we get the Idea of a Perfection from those small Degrees of Perfection which we observe in the Creatures, and then we ascribe all Perfections to God, in an infinite Degree;

4 *The Divine Perfections.*

gree ; and unite them all in the Idea of ONE ALL-PERFECT BEING.

§ 6. So that, in the Order of our Conceptions, we conceive of a Perfection as existing in the Creature, *before* we conceive of it as existing in God, and generally (it may be) before we have any Idea of God at all. And therefore we are apt to conceive (or, at least, to use some Expressions as if we did conceive) some Perfections to have an independent Existence *out of* God, and *prior* to him ; and as if we would try him by that Standard, and approve of his Qualities according as we conceived them to be agreeable to it. But this is a great Mistake : For all Perfection is originally in God, as the *primary* Foundation and Standard, and from that Fountain is communicated to the Creatures, in various limited Degrees, according to their several Ranks and Orders.

§ 7. As his Being includes and comprehends all Perfection ; so no Perfection can possibly exist in the Creature, or be conceived by him, but what first existed in the Creator : Neither can it have any innate Excellency or permanent Existence, but only so far as it resembles Something in God, and is dependent upon him. The Perfection of the Creature consists in his *Resemblance* or *Conformity* to God ; but the Perfection of God consists in his being *what he is*, or like to *himself*, as the primary Standard ; without any antecedent or concomitant Rule or Standard to measure himself by.

§ 8.

§ 8. *Self-Existence* or necessary Existence, without any antecedent Cause or Foundation, is the first *fundamental* Perfection we conceive of in God ; and from *that* all other Perfections necessarily *result* ; such as Eternity, Immutability, Omnipresence, Omniscience, Omnipotence, Wisdom, &c. Indeed, all Perfection in God is, in some Respect, *one* ; that is, all Perfection is, in him, *one* simple, uncompounded, uniform Thing : But our Minds are not capacious enough to form such a comprehensive, clear Idea ; and therefore we must conceive of each particular Perfection, *distinctly* by itself, or our Ideas of them will be confused.

§ 9. We usually conceive of the divine Perfections under two general Heads :

1. *Natural Perfections* ; such as Eternity, Immutability, Omniscience, Omnipotency, &c.
2. *Moral Perfections* ; such as Holiness, Justice, Goodness and Truth ; which are called the *moral Rectitude* of the divine Nature.

Natural Perfections, such as Knowledge, Power, &c. may exist, in a great Degree, in a Being utterly destitute of *moral* Goodness or Holiness ; and be perverted to the worst Ends and Purposes, as they are in the Devils. But *moral* Perfections, such as Justice, Goodness, and Truth, have an *immutable* Excellency and Amiability in them, and cannot be directly perverted, without destroying their very *Nature*. There is indeed a necessary Connection between the natural and moral Perfections of God ; for

Justice, Goodness and Truth presuppose some Degree of Knowledge and Power by which they are exercised ; and Knowledge and Power must be regulated by Justice and Goodness, or otherwise they lose the Excellency of their Nature, and are to be dreaded rather than loved.

§ 10. When God makes a *Creature*, he communicates to him some Degree of his own Perfections, though, being limited, they cannot exist in the same Form and Manner, but under different Circumstances from what they are in the Creator. These *different* Degrees of Perfection, thus communicated, constitute the *different Ranks and Orders* of the Creatures. To the Inanimates he communicates but little more than bare Existence. On the Vegetables he impresses a uniform Motion of the nutritive Parts, with a proper Cohesion. To Animals he communicates an animal Motion and Life, with an Instinct to preserve their Lives and continue their Species, in which they discover a Sagacity very nearly resembling Reason. To *Man* he has communicated the superior Powers of *Reason* and Understanding, whereby he is capable of forming some Ideas of the natural and moral Perfections of God and his Works ; of comparing the Ideas of Things, and of drawing just Inferences and Deductions.

§ 11. When any Creature is endued with such a Degree of Understanding and *Reason*, as to be capable of conceiving of the *natural* Relations of Things, and so of the *natural* Perfections

tions of God ; and is also, in *some Measure*, capable of understanding the Nature of Right and Wrong, or the *moral* Relations of Things, as compared with a *Rule* of right Conduct, and so of the *moral* Perfections of God ; such a Being is called a MORAL AGENT and is capable of *moral Virtue*, and is the Subject of *moral Government and Obligation*. The *moral Virtue*, Goodness or Excellency of such a *moral Agent*, consists in a *Conformity* to the *moral Perfections of God*, as the original Standard of all Perfection.

§ 12. This Conformity is twofold ; either internal and real, or only external and apparent.

1. *Internal or real Virtue* consists in an inward Temper and Disposition of Mind, which is *like to God* and conformable to the moral Perfections of his Nature ; such as Holiness, Justice, Goodness and Truth. And this internal, *divine Principle* will naturally produce a Course of *external Actions* conformable to it, as the natural Effect and Expression of it. And the *ultimate* End and Design of a Person endued with this Principle, will be to act in Conformity to the *divine Perfections*, and to do all to the *Glory of God*.

§ 13. (2.) *External or apparent Virtue* is such an external Conduct as may seem to be the visible Effect or Expression of this inward divine Principle ; but, in Reality, is not ; and proceeds from some *lower* Motive, such as Self-Interest, Honour, Fancy, or the like. Thus a Man may devote a considerable Part of his Estate to publick Uses civil and sacred, may be just and beneficent

ficent to his Neighbour, punctual to his Promises, and abstain from all bodily Excesses; and yet, in all these Things, have no Regard to God, but only to *himself*, to his own Interest, Reputation or Fancy. Although the Matter of these Actions is just and right, and agreeable to the *divine Law*; yet, as they do not proceed from a true *Principle* and right End, they are not really *virtuous*, nor so accounted by the Searcher of Hearts. Indeed the Heathen, who had no higher Principle, generally accounted such Actions to be *virtuous*; but *divine Revelation* teaches us, that there can be no virtuous Actions without a divine Temper of Mind, in Conformity to the *Perfections of God*. [x]

§ 14. Having considered the true Nature and original Standard of moral Virtue, I proceed,

Secondly, To consider the *Obligation* which every rational Creature and moral Agent is under, to be conformed to the *moral Perfections of God*. This *Obligation* arises,

I. And principally, from the *infinite and absolute Perfection* of the divine Nature: For as
God

[x] 2 Pet. 1. 3. *Add to your Faith Virtue*. Eph. 4. 24. Col. 3. 10. --- *Virtutes appellamus sanctos Affectus sanctas Cogitationes et Actiones*.

Wollebii Theologiæ, Lib. 2. Cap. 1. *Virtutes Ethnicorum fuerunt splendida Peccata*.
August.

God is the most perfect Being, so the most *perfect State* of any other Being, must consist in being *like to him*. As he is the only *self-existent* Being, the original Standard of all Perfection, and all Creatures derive their several Degrees of Perfection from *him*, he must be the *only Rule* and Pattern for *them*; and their highest Perfection must consist in being *like to* the original and *all-perfect* Standard. The *greater* Degree of divine Perfection any Creature enjoys, the *more* perfect he must be.

§ 15. Every Creature of God was originally made perfect, *in his own Model* or *Degree*; that is, its Degree of Perfection was uniform, so as to have no Part or Quality deficient, incongruous or repugnant to any other Part; or to have any two Dispositions or Qualities, which, in their own Nature, or under any Circumstances, could operate *contrary* to each other. The Perfection, therefore, of a rational Creature, must be to *continue* in that *perfect* State in which he was created: But to *lose* any Part of it, or to acquire any *contrary* Disposition or Quality, is a Defection from the most *perfect Pattern and Standard*, and a Destruction of the Works of God. This, in Scripture is called ANOMIA, a Deviation from the perfect Law of *moral Rectitude*, founded in the *divine Nature*. It is also called *moral Depravity* or *Sin*, and as it is the first Principle of wrong Action, it is called *Original Sin*.

§ 16. And if a Creature has deviated from this Standard of Perfection, *heretofore*; that will
not

not justify his Deviation from it, for the *Time to come*. For it will remain an eternal and immutable TRUTH, resulting from the Nature of God and the Relation of a rational Creature to him, that *his* Perfection consists in a Conformity to the Perfection of God; and that notwithstanding his former Transgression or Defect has brought upon him a present Indisposition, Unwillingness or *Incapacity* of such a perfect Conformity: For such an Indisposition or Incapacity is so far from being a Justification of his present State, or an Evidence of his being still in a State of Perfection, that, on the contrary, it is yet a further Deviation from the most perfect Standard; for a rational Creature's Indisposition or Incapacity of being like to God, renders him the more unlike to him.

§ 17. Indeed all the Works of God, as they come from him, are perfect; and every Part of them congruous and consistent with each other; so that whenever he makes a *moral Agent*, he endues him with a perfect Disposition and full *Powers* to do his Duty, and be *perfect*, as such a Creature: But if he afterwards, by any Means, contracts a contrary Disposition, or loses his *Power*, that no ways alters the Nature of his *Perfection*, or the Nature of his *Obligation*. The Perfection of the Creature consists in a Conformity to God, *after* he has indisposed or incapacitated himself for it, as much as it did *before*. Notwithstanding all he can do, the same Truth will *eternally* remain, that *his highest Perfection*

Perfection consists in a Conformity to God ; and it is impossible that any Action of his should *annul* or make it void.

§ 18. It is also inconsistent with the divine Perfections to suppose that God should *release* or *discharge* any moral Agent from his Obligation to a perfect Conformity to the divine Perfections ; or that he should *substitute* any other Thing in the Room of it, as that he should only do his *Endeavour*, or *as well as he can*, or the like. For in every Thing wherein he falls short of a *perfect Conformity* to God, in the Disposition of his Mind, or Course of his Actions (according to that *Rank and Order* in which he is placed among the Creatures) it is his *moral Defect*, ANOMIA or Sin. And God's Favour and Approbation is necessarily extended to his Creatures according to the Degree of their Likeness and Conformity to him.

§ 19. Every rational Creature and moral Agent is *obliged* to be perfect and conformed to God, in the highest and strongest Sense in which that Word *Obligation*, is ever used. And all those Obligations which arise from Self-Interest, Hope, Fear, Gratitude, &c. are but *low and faint*, in Comparison of this. Yea, God himself is frequently said (by way of Analogy) to be *obliged* to act according to his own Perfections : But this Obligation, in a more *direct* and *primary Sense*, is said to be incumbent upon his Creatures.

§ 20. II. This Obligation arises, in a secondary

dary Sense, from the *declared Will or Law of God*: That is, as the *Will and Law* of God declare what the *divine Perfections* are; and what Temper and Conduct in *us*, is a Conformity to them: For this we could not certainly know, unless it was declared to us by the *divine Law*; which is therefore the *more immediate Rule* of our Conduct. Indeed if it could be supposed that two or more Actions, under some Circumstances, were *equally* agreeable to all the Perfections of God, then, by his absolute *sovereign Authority*, he might enjoin either of them, by a particular positive Law.

§ 21. III. This Obligation is increased by that *sovereign Power and Authority* which God has over us, as he is our Creator and we his Creatures. For as our Existence depends upon his *meer Good-Will and Pleasure*, we ought to exist in such a *Manner* and for such *Purposes* as are *agreeable* to him, and no other. And he being our sovereign Lord and Proprietor, it is direct *Injustice* to use or dispose of his *Property* contrary to his *Will*: And therefore a Compliance with the *Will* of our Proprietor, is but a Conformity to his *Justice*; which is one of his *divine Perfections*.

§ 22. So that all *moral Virtue and Obligation*, in whatever Light we view it, is to be resolved into a *Conformity to the divine Perfections*; and all the real Goodness and Excellency we can have, and all the Obligation we can be under, is to be *like to God*. The Good or Happiness which

which results to *us*, from a Conformity to the divine Perfections, or the Fear of Punishment if we neglect it, do not properly *make* or *create* any Obligation ; though they may be justly considered as *subordinate* Motives and Incentives to act *according* to the Obligations we were *antecedently* under.

§ 23. But this Principle, that *the moral Perfections of God are the sole Foundation and Standard of moral Virtue and Obligation* ; has been denied by many celebrated Authors : and several other Foundations have been substituted in the Room of it : such as, Self-Interest and Happiness—universal Benevolence---moral Taste and Sense --- Conformity to Reason --- to the moral Fitness of Things---acting according to Truth, and the like. But all these are either imperfect Descriptions of, or Consequences from the moral Perfections of God, or else they have no just Foundation at all. I shall particularly examine each of them.

§ 24. I. Some assert that a Principle of *Self-Love, Self-Interest, and Happiness*, is the only *Foundation of moral Virtue and Obligation*, and of all Religion. That the *only* Motive to Acts of Justice and Kindness towards our Fellow-men, is that they may in their Turns do the same to us. That the *only* Motive and Obligation to Obedience to the Laws of God, is to procure the divine Favour, to obtain Rewards
C and

and avoid Punishments. That we are not bound to pay any *Regard to God*, but only so far as he is *subservient to us* and our Happiness. And that, whatever Men may pretend, there cannot *possibly* be any *other* Obligation, Motive or Spring of Action, in human Nature, but only *Self-Love* and a *Regard to our own Interest and Happiness*. To this Purpose *Campbell on moral Virtue*, says, that “all intelligent Agents can
 “relish Nothing but Pleasure or Happiness,
 “and are universally governed by the Principle
 “of Self-Love†.” That “they are irresistibly,
 “in all Instances, under the prevailing Power
 “of Self-Love; so that we can *no otherwise*
 “value or esteem Persons or Things than according
 “as they gratify this Principle, and
 “serve to promote our *own Interest and Happiness*||.” That “the *Virtue* or Goodness of
 “any moral Action, lies precisely in its Suitableness
 “to gratify *one’s Self-Love**.” Bp. *Gastrell*, in his Sermons at *Boyle’s Lectures*, says, that
 “Happiness is the *ultimate End* of our Being
 “and all our Actions‡.” That “the Power or
 “Right of *obliging* is *nothing else*, but offering
 “to the Mind a Motive either of Happiness to be
 “obtain’d, or Misery to be avoided---and
 “there is no *other* Notion or Ground of Obligation
 “imaginable¶.” That “no Being has a
 “Right or Power of obliging another, any further
 “than he has a Power of contributing to
 “his

† Pag. 97. || P. 101. * 319. ‡ Pag. 121.

¶ P. 91, 92.

his Happiness or Misery.' That ' God can lay Men under *no Obligation* to obey him, any otherwise than by making them know that he has Power to make them *happy or miserable*†.'

§ 25. Now I concede that God has implanted a Principle of *Self-Love* and Self-Preservation in all Animals : and that all Brutes and the greater Part of Mankind are in *fact* govern'd by that *alone*. And it is an Instance of the Wisdom of God in his providential Government of the World, that, since the greater Part of Mankind, in this fallen State, are destitute of any higher or better Principle, he has implanted *this*, which keeps the World in some good Order and Regulation. Men are generally agreed, that *Lying, Stealing, Robbery, Piracy, &c.* are *bad* ; and they seem generally to hate them ; not from a Sense of the real MORAL EVIL of these Things in *themselves*, or their Contrariety to the holy *Nature* and *Law* of God ; but as being contrary to the *Happiness* of the Community, and of *ourselves*. And therefore whenever we hear that any such Acts are done, every one immediately has this Reflection, " It may be *my* Turn to be robbed next, and I wish the Actor was punished, in order to prevent it." I also suppose that a meer *natural Man*, in no Degree illuminated by the Divine Spirit, cannot in any *human Way*, be convinced of any *moral Evil* in Sin, but only by the natural ill Consequences which

which attend it. Since therefore this Principle of Self-Love is implanted by God, and answers many good Ends, it is not to be eradicated ; but regulated by, and made subservient to a Principle which is infinitely higher and better, viz. a Conformity to the moral Perfections of God ; which is the *Standard* of the highest Perfection of human Nature.

§ 26. In Pursuance therefore to this Principle of Self-Love and Happiness, a Man may thus reason with himself, “ I am one of the
 “ Creatures of God, placed in a certain Rank
 “ and Dignity in the Creation, and put into a
 “ Capacity of Happiness, under certain Restrictions and Limitations : I will therefore
 “ endeavour to promote my own Happiness, in
 “ Obedience to the Will of God, and principally that the Glory of his Goodness, Mercy
 “ and Wisdom might be displayed in it. And
 “ as God has committed the Care of *myself*
 “ more immediately to *myself*, I, considering
 “ myself as his Servant especially appointed to
 “ this Business, will, in Obedience to his Commands, take especial Care to glorify him in
 “ this Way.”

§ 27. But for a Man to make the *sole, supreme, or ultimate End* of all Being and Action to be for *himself alone* or his *own* Happiness, as the *summum Bonum* ; and to regard God and all other Beings, only so far as they may *serve himself* or be subservient to his own Happiness, or *gratify his Principle of Self-Love*, is the most
 absolute

absolute Inversion of the *Order, Dignity and Perfection* of Beings : and one of the worst Principles that can be in human Nature : it being as great an Absurdity, as it is to suppose, that *a small Part is bigger than the Whole*. And the Man who is known to act from no higher Principle than this, as corrupt as the World is, will hardly be admitted to any publick Office or Trust in the civil State. The Stoicks seemed to have a better Notion of Virtue than this ; for they supposed that Virtue was really *amiable in itself*, antecedent to the Advantage of it to Mankind.

§ 28. Therefore all those Rules of *pretended moral* Conduct, which are formed *meerly* upon the Principles of *Self-Love* or a *Ballance of Self-Interest* among Mankind ; altho' they may answer some good Purposes in *civil Life*, and as *human Laws*, may keep the World from many hurtful Disorders, yet they are far from being Rules of *true moral Virtue* ; or Means whereby a Man may obtain the *special Favour* of God and eternal Happiness.

§ 29. II. Another Principle set up as the *sole* Foundation of moral Virtue and Obligation, is universal *Benevolence* or *good Will to all other Beings ; God and the Creatures*. That this Benevolence is *natural* to all Mankind, and the *only* Duty enjoined in the *Law of Nature* ; and that the *only* Obligation we can be under to obey any Law, is a Principle of *Benevolence* to ourselves

selves and others. To this Purpose Bp. *Cumberland* on the *Laws of Nature*, says, that ‘all
 ‘moral Laws are summed up in Benevolence.’
 (a) And that ‘from hence all moral Virtue
 ‘may be deduced.’ (b) That ‘Benevolence
 ‘is a Will to pursue every one his own Happi-
 ‘ness, together with the Happiness of others.’
 (c) That ‘Happiness consists in the Possession
 ‘of good Things.’ (d) That ‘moral Good is
 ‘ultimately to be resolved into *common natural*
 ‘*Good*.’ (e) That ‘particular Virtues, such as
 ‘*Justice*, &c. are nothing else but Ways and
 ‘Means of obtaining *natural Good*.’ (f) That
 ‘the *only* Reason why Virtue is good, is because
 ‘it tends to the natural Good of the Publick.’
 (g) That ‘there cannot be a greater Object
 ‘of beatific Actions than the common Good.’
 (h) That ‘the Law of Nature is a Proposition
 ‘which points out such an Action as promotes
 ‘the common Good, and the Happiness of par-
 ‘ticular Persons.’ (i) That ‘the Law of Na-
 ‘ture declares those Actions *only* which tend to
 ‘the publick Good.’ (k) That ‘the whole
 ‘Force of Obligation to obey any Law, is from
 ‘the Rewards and Punishments annexed.’ (l)

§ 30. Now I readily concede that *Benevolence*
 or a Disposition to *do Good* and *promote the Hap-
 piness*

a Chap. I. § 9. b § 10. c § 6. d § 5.
 e Chap. III. § 1. f § 3. g Chap. V. § 5.
 h Chap. V. § 13. i Chap. V. § 1.
 k § 10. l § 11.

happinefs of others, is one very good *Principle*, and an Imitation of the *Goodness* of God. But this cannot be the *sole* Foundation of all moral Duty and Obligation, because this would be an Imitation of *one* of the divine Perfections *only*, exclusive of all the Rest ; and every moral Agent is obliged to imitate the divine *Justice* and *Truth* as well as the divine *Goodness*. To conceive of *Justice* and *Truth* only as *Parts* or subordinate Means of *Goodness*, is to confound our *clear* and distinct Ideas of the divine Perfections. If we conceive of Justice and Truth only as *subservient* to Goodness, then the Justice of God's *Right of Dominion* over us, consists *only* in its Advantage to us : and the *Justice* of any Punishment inflicted by God, consists *only* in this, that it is for the *Good* of the Creatures ; and there is no Evil in God's declaring a *Falshood*, but only as it may bring *Misery* upon the Creatures. Which Suppositions evidently confound our *clear* Ideas of the divine Perfections, and all Morality.

§ 31. When Man enjoyed the *Image of God* ; and particularly participated of the divine *Goodness* ; he was endued with a Disposition to *do Good*, and promote the *Happinefs* of all other Beings : but since the Fall, there is but a little of this Principle of universal and *disinterested* Benevolence among Mankind. And all the *Resemblance* of it, in *unregenerate* Men, proceeds from a Principle of *Self-Love* ; extended to the proper Means of promoting our own *Happinefs*. For every Man who has not very contracted Views,

Views, will easily see that he cannot be very happy *himself*, unless others about him are so too; who, in their Turns, may help to happify him. And so, from a meer Principle of Self-Love, may observe the Rule of *Doing as he would be done by*; and may at length contract a *Habit* of doing some benevolent Acts, on a *sudden*, without any particular Reflection upon the Principle or Motives upon which such a Habit was originally formed. But this Principle of Benevolence, which in the present State is so imperfect, and at best is but *one* of the many Perfections which every moral Agent ought to be endued with, cannot be the *sole, exclusive* Foundation of all moral Virtue.

§ 32. It is easy to conceive of Benevolence to the *Creatures*, as a Disposition to promote their Happiness: but I can't easily conceive of what Bp. *Cumberland* means by *Benevolence to God*. He defines Benevolence to be 'a Will to pursue every one his *own Happiness*, together with the Happiness of others.' (*m*) And says he does not mean a *lifeless Volition*, which affects nothing; but that whereby we execute what we desire.' (*n*) That 'Benevolence universally produces a good Effect to the Person to whom we wish well.' (*o*) That 'it is an Affection whereby we desire Things grateful or pleasing to God.' (*p*) 'That is, which, by Way of
Analogy

m Chap. I. S. 6.

n Chap. I. S. 4.

o S. 8.

p S. 4.

‘ Analogy to Man, leaves his Mind in a State
‘ of *Tranquility, Joy, or Complacency* ; which,
‘ he says may be safely ascribed to God.’ (q)

§ 33. Now, tho’ we may and ought to conceive with Pleasure, that the Happiness of God is absolutely *perfect, necessary, eternal and immutable* ; yet we cannot directly *will, desire* or *endeavour* that his Happiness should be either *increas’d* or *continued*. His *Happiness, Joy* or *Complacency* may be the Subject of our *pleasing Contemplation* ; but cannot be the Object of our *Volition, Desire* or *Endeavour*. The Supposition that his Happiness can be any ways *consequent* upon our *Volition* or *Endeavour*, destroys the proper Idea of it. Indeed the *declarative* Glory of God consists in some external Operations or Manifestations to the Creature, in which we may be, in some measure, *active* or *instrumental* ; but the Happiness of God is an internal State *within himself* ; to which we can have no Relation, but only by a *pleasing Perception* or *Contemplation*.

But tho’ it is so difficult to form any Idea of Benevolence to God ; yet Bp. *Cumberland* makes it to be the ‘ *whole* of Piety towards
‘ God ; (r) and the Sum of the Duties of the
‘ first Table of the Law : which he says consist
‘ in a Sense or Conviction, that it is for the In-
‘ terest of all, that God should be the supreme

D

‘ Governor

‘Governor of the World, for the common Good
 ‘and the Happiness of each of us in particular.’ (s)
 And says that ‘we ought to make ourselves ac-
 ‘ceptable to God, as the Cause of the common
 ‘Good, and consequently our own.’ (t) By
 which he seems evidently to mean, that our Be-
 nevolence to God has a peculiar Reference to
 him as the *Governor of the World*; and is a
 Wish or Desire that he might *govern well*, with
 Wisdom, Honour, and Success, for the com-
 mon Happiness, and my own in particular: and
 in order to secure his Favour, should endeavour
 to make myself *acceptable to him*. So that this
 Benevolence towards God, seems ultimately to
 terminate only in Benevolence towards *ourselves*;
 or in a wishing well to those Ways and Means
 which are necessary to promote my *own* Happi-
 ness in Conjunction with the Happiness of *others*.
 But this whole Scheme of the *Laws of Nature*,
 advanced by Bp. Cumberland, is fully and clearly
 confuted by fourteen Arguments in the Appen-
 dix to Mr. Maxwell’s English Translation of it.

§ 34. Another Criterion of moral Vir-
 tue and Obligation, is moral *Taste and Sense*. †
 They say, that ‘when any Man sees or con-
 ‘siders any Action, he immediately *approves* or
 ‘*disapproves* of it, by Virtue of an *internal Taste*

s Chap. IX. Sec. 2. t Chap. I. Sec. 24.

† Hutcheson on Virtue, &c. passim.

‘or *Sense*, which he *naturally* has in himself;
‘just as Things are agreeable or disagreeable to
‘his *natural Taste*.’ That ‘this his *Taste* or
‘*Sense* is the sole Criterion of *Right* and *Wrong*,
‘and the Standard of moral *Good* and *Evil*.’
And that ‘the only *Obligation* he can be under,
‘is to conform to the inward *Sense* of his own
‘Mind; at least, that is the *next* and *immediate*
‘Rule to him.’ Upon which I would observe,

I. That so far as such a *Sense* or Disposition
of judging of what is right and wrong, exists in
the Mind of a meer *natural* and *uninlightened*
Man, it proceeds wholly from a Principle of
Self-Love, improved in the Manner I before re-
lated; whereby, from *general Observation*, he
fixes upon certain general *Rules* or Methods of
Conduct among Mankind, which he apprehends
will be most conducive to the *general Good* and
his own Happiness in particular; and thereupon
contracts a *Habit* of judging upon particular Ac-
tions, as being *right* or *wrong*, upon a *Sudden*,
without particularly considering the Reasons,
upon which such a Judgment was *originally*
founded. And this *Sense* or Judgment is *right*
or *wrong* according to the original *Rules* of Con-
duct he happen’d to fix upon. Some indeed
make this moral *Sense* to be nearly the same
with *Conscience*. But *Conscience* is the *Judg-*
ment which a Man forms of his own Actions,
being *agreeable* or *disagreeable* to the *Law* of
God: but where no divine Law is supposed (un-
less it be that a man ought to make the *Sense*
of

24 *Moral Taste greatly corrupted.*

of his own Mind, the *Rule* of his Conduct) then his *Sense* and *Taste* is the *primary* and *only Standard* of judging (as it is in bitter and sweet) and so there can be no Room or Place for the Exercise of Conscience ; unless it be in judging whether a Man's Actions are agreeable to his Judgment.

§ 35. (2) Altho', when Man was at first created in the *divine Image*, he had a pleasing *Taste*, *Sense* and *Approbation* of every Thing which is agreeable to the divine Perfections, yet, since the *Fall*, his Understanding is *darkened*, his Judgment is *perverted*, his *Taste* and *Relish* of Things *corrupted*, and his *Mind* and *Conscience* is *defiled* ; as we are fully taught by divine Revelation, Rom. iii. 9. &c. *Both Jews and Gentiles are all under Sin. There is none that understandeth. There is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the Way. There is none that doeth good ; no, not one.* The best of the *Heathen Moralists* taught, approved of, and practised sundry gross *Vices* and Immoralities, particularly mentioned in Bp. Cumberland's *Imperfection of Heathen Morality*, † and many other Authors. And they supposed that their *Gods* had as many corrupt Passions and Vices as they had *themselves*. Whole Nations have allowed of and tolerated many *plain Vices*, by their public Laws, particularly mentioned by Mr. Locke.

† Section 9.

Locke. † And we see, by sad Experience, that even in *Christian* Countries, Men may gradually grow so corrupt as to practise *Adultery, Fornication, Drunkenness, Duelling, &c.* without much Remorse ; and, among their own Companions, will speak of these Things with Pleasure ; yea, *boast* of some of them as heroic Actions. And if this moral Taste be the Criterion of *Right* and *Wrong* ; then every Man's Taste is the *Rule to himself* ; and there may be as many *different* Rules of Virtue and Vice, as there are vitiated Tastes among Mankind. †

§ 36. Another more plausible Standard of *moral Virtue* and *Obligation*, is *Reason*. Many Authors talk much of *Reason*, as if it was an *infallible* Guide ; but do not sufficiently distinguish the *different Senses* in which that Word is used ; sometimes to denote the rational *Objects* perceived, and sometimes the *perceiving Power* of the Mind.

I. *Objective Reason* signifies the *OBJECTS* perceived by our Minds ; such as God, his Perfections, Ideas and Works, as participating of some Degree of his Perfections ; together with all

† *On Human Understanding*, Book I. Chap. III.

† *Mr. Campbell and Mr. Hutcheson wrote against one another, and plainly confuted each others Principles, although they could not establish their own.*

all the various Modes and Relations of these Things one to another. All *just* Conceptions and *true Propositions* concerning any of these Things, are called *Reason* in the Object. As if I lay down these Propositions, that *Every self-existent Being is eternal and immutable. That God is to be worshiped and obeyed by his Creatures.* Most Men will say that these Propositions are REASON, or agreeable to *Reason*. Now *Reason*, taken in this Sense, according to Mr. Norris, signifies the *Divine Ideas*, or God's Conceptions of his own Perfections, as they are in themselves, or as they are exhibited in his Works; and may, in some Respect, be said to be *God himself*, as conceived of by himself. And so far as the Divine Ideas are, in any Way or Degree communicated to us, and are the Objects of our Conception; our *Reason* seems to be an Emanation from and Part of the infinite *Intelligence and Wisdom* of God, *replenishing and illuminating* our Minds. Reason, in this Sense, is an *infallible Guide*, and comes near to the Standard I have before laid down. But I suppose this is not the Meaning of those Authors who set up the *Oracles* of human Reason, in Opposition to divine Revelation.

§ 37 (2) *Subjective Reason* has *Man* for the *Subject*, and signifies a *Power in the human Mind*, whereby a Man is able, in some Measure, to conceive of the Objects before mentioned, and to draw necessary Inferences and Deductions from them, both of a speculative and practical Nature.

Now

Now Reason, considered as a *Power* or Faculty in Man, though it is a very great and noble Endowment, vastly superior to the *brutal Instinct*, yet it is subject to many *Imperfections* and Limitations, and, in this fallen State, to many Delusions and pernicious Errors. And this arises partly from wrong Conceptions of the Objects, and partly from wrong Deductions from our own Conceptions. For in order to reason right, we must have not only just and *clear Conceptions* of the Objects reasoned upon (at least so far as as we pretend to reason upon them) but clear Perceptions of the *Relation* of our own Ideas, in order to draw just Inferences and Deductions from them.

§ 38. Reason is tolerably well capable of understanding the Principles of *Self-Interest*, and the necessary Means of promoting the Happiness of Mankind in their private and political Capacity. From hence proceeded the just and rational Institutes of the *Civil Law* among the ancient *Romans*, which were so well calculated to promote their publick Peace and natural Happiness. Yet even in these Things, Reason is but an imperfect Guide; for in some Countries many evident *Vices*, plainly detrimental to the natural Happiness of Mankind, were *allowed* by the *publick Laws*. But then Reason goes but a very little Way in determining the Principles of human Actions, considered as *moral, religious*, or *acceptable* to God, or relative to the future Happiness; unless a Man reasons upon the *Data*
of

of divine Revelation. Indeed Revelation supposes Man to be a *rational Creature*, capable of understanding the Propositions designed to be communicated to him, of *comparing* one with another, and of forming a *consistent Scheme* of the whole. But then there must be some *Data* or *first* moral Principles given by God himself, for human Reason to act and build upon, or otherwise he has no *sure* Foundation for any just Inferences and Deductions. Thus if a Man sets out upon this Principle, that his *own* Happiness is the sole and ultimate End of *his* Creation; or that a Conformity to his own Sense and Taste of Things, is the *only* Thing necessary to procure the divine Favour and eternal Happiness, how justly soever he may reason upon these Principles, yet if they prove to be false, the whole Superstructure will *fail* him.

§ 39. Besides, Reason considered as a meer *Power* or *Faculty* in Man, cannot possibly be the Criterion of Virtue, or the *original* Standard to which human Actions *ought* to be conformed; since it is only a *Power in us* to *find out* and know what that Standard is, and the *Measure* by which we try the Conformity of our own Actions to that Standard; as a Scale or Pole is the Measure by which we determine the Conformity of an Edifice to the Plan laid by the Architect. Reason therefore, considered as a Power in *us*, supposes a *superior* Standard by which our Actions are to be *tried*; which is the

moral

moral Perfections or Law of God, to which our Actions ought to be conformed.

§ 40. Furthermore ; Reason, considered as a meer human Power or Qualification can never have such a transcendent Excellency and Dignity, as to be the Criterion of the divine Favour, Approbation and eternal Felicity, or claim such a *supreme Authority* and Empire, as to be the Foundation of all moral Obligation ; for this would make Man, or one of his own Faculties to be his supreme Law-giver and Governor. And it is plainly contrary to the clearest Dictates of Reason we are Masters of, to deny this supreme Dignity and Authority to the infinite *Perfections of God*, and yet to give it to such a subordinate, limited and imperfect Thing as *human Reason*. I say not this to depreciate or *decry* human Reason, but to allow its just Excellency and Dignity, without making of it to interfere with the eternal, immutable, and absolute Perfections of the *all-perfect God*.

§ 41. Besides, human Reason, without evident Data or Principles to proceed upon, especially under Prepossessions and wrong Inclinations, is very *various* in its Dictates ; so that what appears to be reasonable to *one* Person or Nation, appears to be utterly unreasonable to *another* ; and that even in some of the plainest Instances of Virtue and Vice, which one would think might be better regulated even by the Principles of Self-Interest and Happiness.

§ 42. Lastly, Reason is of such a *general*
E Nature,

Nature, as that it cannot be the special Criterion of moral Virtue and Obligation ; for if so, then every Thought, Word or Action in Mathematicks, Law, Mechanicks or Agriculture, which is agreeable to Reason, would be a moral Virtue ; which I think no Man ever yet asserted. There must therefore be some Criterion or Rule to determine moral Virtue and Obligation, which is more particular and precise than the general Idea of human Reason.

§ 43. Some confound Reason with *Conscience*, and say that God has implanted in every Man a natural Conscience, whereby he is able, with his own Reason, to know what is right and wrong, and the Will of God, and to act accordingly. Now, ' Conscience is the Judgment which a Man ' forms concerning his own Actions, as agreeable ' or disagreeable to the Law and Will of God : ' and this ultimately resolves the Rule into the *divine Law* ; and as the divine Law results from the divine Nature and Perfections, this Rule is so far right, and the same which I have before laid down. But then Reason is not the Law itself, but only the Means to find out the Law. And Conscience is not the Law itself, but only his Judgment upon the Law ; which Judgment is sometimes right and sometimes wrong : which plainly supposes an antecedent *superior Standard*.

§ 44. V. Another supposed Foundation of moral Virtue and Obligation, is the *moral Fitness of Things*. They say that there are certain, necessary,

cessary, eternal and unchangeable Relations and Fitnesses of Things; which *necessarily* determine the Will and Actions of God, and *ought* to determine the Will and Actions of Men: and that the highest *Obligation* that any Being can be under, is to be conformed to these *moral Fitnesses*. To this Purpose Dr. Clark says, that 'there are
' certain necessary and eternal Differences of
' Things, and certain consequential Fitnesses or
' Unfitnesses of the Application of them, one to
' another, founded unchangeably in the Nature
' and Reason of Things.' (a) That 'the same
' necessary and eternal different Relations, which
' different Things bear one to another, and the
' same consequential Fitness or Unfitness of the
' Application of them, one to another, with Re-
' gard to which the *Will* of God always and
' *necessarily* does determine itself, ---ought like-
' wise constantly to determine the Wills of all
' subordinate *rational* Beings; to govern all their
' Actions by the same Rules, for *the Good of the*
' *Public*.' That 'these *eternal* and *necessary*
' Differences of Things, make it *fit* and rea-
' sonable for Creatures so to act; they cause it
' to be their *Duty*, and lay an *Obligation* upon
' them so to do; separate from the Considera-
' tion of these Rules, being the Will and Com-
' mand of God.' (b) That 'these eternal
' moral Obligations are in perpetual Force,
' meerly from their *own Nature*, and the ab-
' stract

* On natural and revealed Religion, P. 185. b P. 150.

‘abstract Reason of Things.’ (c) And that ‘the original Obligation of all is the eternal Reason of Things.’ (d) But have the Gentlemen who talk thus, any clear Ideas of what they mean by *these THINGS*, whose Nature or Properties are necessary, eternal and immutable? Where are these *Things* to be found? Are they Creatures? or, Are they the eternal Creator? If by these *Things* they mean the divine Nature, Perfections, or Ideas; and if, by the *Fitnesses* of Things, they mean the Unity, Harmony or Congruity of the divine Nature, Perfections, or Ideas; or our *just* Conceptions of them, then they mean something that is *real*; and I readily allow that these *Things*, or Objects of Conception, are necessary, eternal and immutable; and that the Will and Actions of God are necessarily determined by his *own Perfections*; and that a Conformity to them, is the Foundation of all moral Obligation in Men. But to suppose that God’s Will should be necessarily determined by any Thing, even by abstract *Justice*, *Goodness*, or *Truth*, considered not as his own Perfections, but as *Things out of, distinct from, or independent of himself*, is highly *absurd*. For this is, in Effect, to suppose the Existence of *other* Beings, necessarily and eternally existing, which are *superior to him*, and to which he is *bound* to be conformed as the Measure and Standard of his Perfection. Or if by these *Things* are meant the Creatures, or any Actions or Properties in them

them or resulting from them, or any *Entia Rationalis* or Creatures of Imagination ; then these temporary or fleeting Things can have no eternal or immutable Existence, Relation or Fitnesses, or any such supreme Excellency or *Authority*, so as to be the Foundation of all *moral Obligation* either in God or Man.

§ 45. VI. Another supposed Foundation of moral Virtue and Obligation, is a *Conformity to Truth*. Mr. *Wollaston* says, that ' we ought to ' *treat every Thing as being what it is.*' That ' we ought to *conduct* towards every Person and ' Thing in all the Relations it stands in to us ' and other Things, as being what in *Truth* and ' *Fact* it is.' That ' these Relations may be ' expressed in many true Propositions, which ' may be affirmed and denied by *Actions* as well ' as *Words* : ' that ' every Action which implies ' the Truth of any true Proposition is *morally* ' *right* : ' and that every Action which implies ' the *Denial* of any true Proposition is *morally* ' *wrong*.' And that ' the Virtue or Viciousness ' of any Action consists *wholly* in this, that it is ' an *Affirmation* or *Denial* of some true Propo- ' sition.' (a) Now if Truth is taken essentially for one of the moral *Perfections* of God, then a Conformity to this Perfection, in our Temper and Actions, is so far *right*, and agreeable to the Rule I have before laid down. But if *Truth* be taken in a general and *metaphysical* Sense, to signify

a Religion of Nature, Sec. I. passim.

nify only the Truth of *Facts*, and the *natural* Relation of Things, I think the *Morality* of any Action cannot be determined by it. For all Facts may be *conceded* as true and brought into a Proposition, and yet the Question of *Right* and Obligation, may still be as undetermined as ever. As, what *Obligation* am I under to act or not act in such a Case? What Actions are the *Denial* of such a Proposition? and what is the Crime of *denying* a true Proposition in Actions, or even in *Words*, upon a Supposition that there is no *moral Law* antecedently existing which *forbids* such a Denial?

§ 46. As suppose I am *poor* and needy and my Neighbour is *rich* and has more than he is likely to want, may I not privately *take* and *use* some of his Goods?

A. says, if you take and *use* your Neighbour's Goods, you treat them as being your *own*, and practically *declare* that they are your *own*; when in Truth they are *not*: and you practically *deny* the Truth of this Proposition, that they are your Neighbour's; and so you are guilty of *Lying*.

B. replies No; for I have a *Right* to take and use my Neighbour's Goods, under these Circumstances; and my using them is no Declaration that they are *mine*, or that they are *not his*. Here all the Facts are *conceded*, as in Truth they are; and yet the *Right* remains undecided, and will remain so until it is decided by some *moral Law* or Rule which results from the *divine Justice* or *Truth*, viz. That every Man

ought

ought to have the *sole* Use of his own ; or, that it is *unjust* to use another's Property without his *Consent*.

§ 47. And supposing that all Vices are to be resolved into *Lying* ; by what Rule does it appear, that *Lying* is a *moral* Evil ?

Wollaston says ' because it is a Denial of *Facts* that are *true*.' But there is *no Crime* in that, if there be *no antecedent* moral Obligation *not* to deny them. Therefore, to lay it down, as a *first* Principle, that we are obliged to keep to historical Truth, is to lay that down as a *first* Principle, which needs a *preceding* one to support it. And therefore it is ultimately to be resolved into this fundamental Principle, that we are *obliged* to be conformed to the eternal and immutable *Justice* and *Truth* of God. Without this, a Conformity to the Truth of *Facts* or *historical Truth*, can only be a *natural Convenience*, at most ; but has Nothing in it of the Nature of *moral Virtue* or Obligation.

§ 48. VII. Another supposed Standard of moral Virtue and Obligation, is *Right* and *Wrong*. That whatsoever is morally *right*, is a moral Virtue ; and whatsoever is morally *wrong*, is a Vice. That the highest Obligation of every moral Agent (whether God or Man) is to be conformed to that which is *right*, and to abstain from that which is *wrong*. That every Man naturally has in his own Mind the Idea of *Right*, and by this, as the ultimate Standard, he judges
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of all Beings and Actions, beyond which there is a *ne plus ultra*. To which I reply,

§ 49. (1.) That the Idea of *Right* plainly contains these three distinct Ideas ;

First, The Idea of a *Rule* or Standard, to which any Action or Thing ought to be conformed, in order to its being denominated *Right*.

Secondly, The Idea of the Thing that is conformed to the Standard.

Thirdly, The Idea of the Relation of these two Objects, that the latter is conformed to the former.

If the Mind sees a *Conformity* of the Action or Thing to its Standard, then it judges it to be *right* ; and if it sees a Non-conformity, then it judges it to be *wrong*. Therefore the Idea of *Right*, cannot be the Idea of the Standard itself, but is an Idea *subsequent* to and consequent upon it ; and plainly presupposes a *superior* Standard to which the Thing ought to be *conformed* in order to its being denominated *right*.

§ 50. (2.) This Principle sets up a Thing which is *not* God, to be a Standard for *God* ; a Rule to *try* him by, and to which he ought to be conformed. Which is to suppose a Being or Thing antecedent to the *first*, and higher than the highest ; which is manifestly absurd. Indeed by observing various Instances of the Conformity of Things to their Standard, a Man may get a general *abstract* Idea of *Right*, before he has the Idea of *God* ; but then, if he traces back his own Ideas to the *first* Source, he
must

must recur to one eternal and *self-existent* Being, who is the Original and Foundation of all Perfection and *Standard* of all that is right---Here he comes to a *ne plus ultra*, and not before. And to set up any Thing which is not God, as being *eternal*, immutable and independent, is to set up *another* God, with some of his essential Properties, and as a *Standard superior* to him.

§ 51. (3.) The general, abstract Idea of *Right*, being a Conformity of a Thing to its *Standard*, there will be as *many and various* Ideas of Right, as there are *Standards* of Conformity. Thus a *right Line* is made by a strait Rule or Scale. A Traveller takes the *right Way*, when he takes that which will bring him *quickest* or *easiest* to the Place designed : that being the *Standard of Right* in his Mind. A natural Man, when he does that which he conceives to be most for his *own Interest* and Happiness (which is his ultimate End) does what he conceives to be *right* : and a Man acting under the Direction of divine *Revelation*, makes a Conformity to the *divine Nature* and Perfections to be his Rule and *Standard of Right*. And every Man conceives that to be *wrong*, which is a Non-conformity to the *Standard* he fixes upon, let it be *what it will*. But if it could be supposed that a Man has *no Standard* of Right in his own Mind, then the Idea of *Right* itself immediately vanishes ; for there can be no *relative* Ideas where there is no Conception of the Subjects from whence those Relations result. Indeed, if by Right is meant

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the divine Perfections, especially God's Justice and Truth, or a Conformity to them, as the original Standard ; this is the same Criterion I have before laid down. But if by Right is meant any *Entity* or Relation *necessarily* existing *out of* God, not derived *from* him or dependent *upon* him, and to which *he* is obliged to be conformed, as the Standard of *his* Perfection ; such a Conception is a *meer Imagination*, and is, in Effect, a setting up of *another* God not only *besides* him, but *above* him ; which is so far from being the Foundation of *true* Religion and Morality, that it seems to be a Kind of *Idolatry*.

§ 52. VIII. The last supposed Foundation of moral Virtue and Obligation, which I shall mention, is *Obedience to the Will and Commands of God*, with this *ultimate View*, to obtain his Favour and Rewards, and thereby to *promote my own Happiness*. This is the same Principle I mentioned before ; but only Obedience to God is here proposed as a *subordinate Means* to promote Self-Interest, *as an ultimate End*. But I conceive that the Nature of an *ultimate End* is not at all altered or made better, by the Goodness of the subordinate *Means* proposed in order to obtain it. Although I am never so careful to do that which is agreeable to the divine Law, yet, upon this Principle, I regard God only as *he* is *subservient* to me ; for if I obey him upon no other Motive but only *the expected Wages*, I view him only as a Servant to me. And though I should

should suppose, that he has an infinitely *better* Disposition and *greater* Capacity to reward and happify me, than all *other* Beings, and so should value his Favour *above* all the World besides, yet still this does not alter the Nature of *my View* ; I still esteem and value him only as the *best* of Servants, or as a Being most subservient to my *own Interest*.

§ 53. Upon this Principle, the Obedience paid to *God*, is of the same Nature and Kind with that which is paid to an earthly *King*. We regard the King or supreme Magistrate, as such, only as he is subservient to the Good of the Community and my Good in particular ; and if we believe that he has the best Disposition and Capacity to promote these Ends, of any Man that we know of, this is the highest Regard we can ordinarily have for an earthly King, as such. But there is an infinitely different Kind of Regard to be paid to God upon the Account of his own *intrinsic* Excellencies and Perfections, *antecedent* to the Consideration of his being our Creator, Benefactor or Governor. And if we do not serve God from an infinitely *better* Principle than we serve an earthly *King*, there is no Probability that ever we shall obtain the Reward of *eternal Happiness*.

§. 54. Some other Authors have laid down *other* Foundations of moral *Virtue* and *Obligation* ; but it will be needless to mention any more ; since whatever fundamental Principles Men may build upon, considered as *distinct* from and *independent*

dependent of the one self-existent, eternal, immutable and all-perfect Being, they will, upon Examination, be found to have no real, permanent and stable Foundation at all.

§ 55. Finally, some Treatises on *Ethics* seem to build upon almost all these *several* Foundations, confusedly *mixed* together, without any Distinction of their Nature, Order and Relation; which leave the Mind *confused*, and unsettled upon any real Foundation at all. † But so far as these *latter* Principles may, in *any Sense*, be admitted, it is in the following Order and Relation, *viz.*

1. The divine Perfections are the *primary*, the *ultimate* and *sole* Foundation and Standard of all moral Virtue and Obligation.

2. The Law or Will of God is the *next* and *immediate* Rule to us, as it declares what these Perfections are; and what Temper and Conduct in us, is a Conformity to them. Which also creates *an additional* Obligation, as he is our sovereign Lord and Proprietor.

3. *Reason* is a Power or Faculty in us whereby we are, in some Measure, able to *understand* this Law, compare our Temper and Actions with it, and judge of their Conformity to it.

4. By a *Course* of reasoning and *judging* upon any Law or Rule, we acquire a *Habit* of judging on a *sudden*, in particular Cases, without *distinctly* recollecting the Principles or Reasons upon which we formerly judged. If this be all that

† *Grove's Ethics.*

that is meant by *moral Sense, Taste or Instinct*, it may be conceded.

5. The greater Part of Mankind are, in *Fact*, governed by a meer natural Principle of *Self-Love* ; and a Regard to the *public Good*, so far as they *conceive* their *own Interest and Happiness* to be involved in it. And in those who are endowed with a *higher Principle*, Self-Interest may be an *additional Stimulus or Incitement* to do that which was an *antecedent Duty*.

§ 56. Having shewn that the *moral Perfections* of God are the *sole Criterion and Standard* of all *Perfection and Obligation* in the Creature ; and the *Insufficiency of all other Foundations* ; I proceed,

Thirdly, To shew, That divine Revelation is the *only Way and Means* whereby we can *know* what the *Perfections of God* are, and what *Dispositions and Conduct in us*, are a *Conformity to these Perfections*. I suppose that the *Angels and glorified Saints in Heaven*, by their own Reason, could not so perfectly find out the *Perfections and Will of God*, but that there is a *Necessity of some particular Revelations and Directions* : And that *Adam*, in a State of *Innocency*, could not, by his own *natural Reason*, know what Use he might make of all the *Trees in the Garden* : and therefore God told him, *that of every Tree of the Garden he might freely eat ; but of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, he might not eat, nor so much as touch it.*
It

It is certain that Man, in his *fallen* and *darkened* State, stands in Need of divine Revelation to instruct him in the *Nature* and *Perfections* of God, to teach him his *Duty*, and how to obtain a *Restoration* to the divine Favour.

§ 57. It is highly *probable*, if not *certain*, that all that imperfect *Knowledge* which the *Heathens* had of the Nature and Will of God, they received by Tradition from *Noah*, and the Revelations made to the ancient Patriarchs and Prophets; and especially from the Writings of *Moses*. *Plato* says, that ‘all Laws came originally from divine Revelation:’ (a) And that ‘Virtue is not by Nature or Instruction, but by a divine Gift.’ (b) *Mr. Jenkins*, in his *Reasonableness of Christianity*, says, that ‘whatsoever there is of Excellency in the Philosophy of the *Heathens*, is owing to Revelation,’ (c) *Clemens*, President of the College in *Alexandria*, A. D. 192, says, that ‘the *Greek Philosophers* took their main Principles out of *Moses* and the Prophets.’ (d) Almost all the ancient Fathers, especially *Eusebius* (e) and *Theodorit* (f) illustrate and confirm this, in a great Variety of Instances. *Hermes Trimegistus*, the famous *Egyptian Priest*, is said to have conversed with *Abrabam*, when he went down into

a De Legibus.

b Dialog. Meno.

c Vol. I. P. 256.

d Stromata, Lib. I. & V.

e Præp. Evangel. Lib. I. Cap. VI. & IX. & Lib. XIII. C. XII.

f Therapeutica,

into *Egypt*, and thereupon to rectify the *Egyptian* Theology in several Things. *Sanchroniaton*, the *Phœnician*, who, in the Time of the Judges, wrote a History of the World, says he took the principal Parts of it from the Writing of *Jerubbaal*, Priest of *Jehovah*, or (as it is expressed in Greek) *Hierumbal*, Priest of *Jeuo*. The *mosaic* Writings were spread far and wide in the extensive Reign of King *Solomon*, and in the *Babylonish* Captivity ; and were probably carried, by the Queen of *Sheba* to the uttermost Parts of the Earth. Some devout *Jews* dwelt in every Nation under Heaven, (g) who, doubtless, carried the old Testament with them. *Daniel*, who was Master of the wise Men of *Babylon*, taught the Knowledge of the true God ; and gave such Demonstrations of his Perfections, as that *Nebuchadnazar* and *Darius* commanded all Nations, People and Languages to serve the God of *Daniel*, upon the severest Penalties, (b) And that they might the better know who this God was, and how to serve him ; it is probable that *Daniel* made or procured the Greek Translation, spoken of by *Aristobulus* a famous *Jew* of *Alexandria*, and Peripatetic Philosopher, mentioned in the second Book of *Maccabees*, (i) who says ‘ there was a Greek Translation of the ‘ Writings of *Moses*, &c. before the Time of ‘ *Alexander* and the *Persian* Empire ; and that ‘ *Pythagoras*, *Socrates*, *Plato* and *Orpheus* critically searched the Writings of *Moses*, and took their

g Acts ii. 5. b Dan. iv. 29. & vi. 26. i B. ii. C. 1.

‘ their *principal Sentiments* out of them ; and, in
 ‘ many Instances, transcribed the very Words.’ (*k*)
 The *Septuagint* Translation was made near three
 Hundred Years before *Christ*, and was generally
 read by the Philosophers and Historians of all
 Nations. Most of the *Heathen* Moralists
 wrote *after* that Translation was made ; and the
best of them, after the Publication of *Christianity*.
 So that the Supposition which many have made,
 that ‘ whatever the *Heathen* Philosophers, in
 ‘ *Fact* knew, they knew by the *meer* Light of
 ‘ Nature, without any Help from divine Reve-
 ‘ *lation*,’ has not the *least* Foundation : and I
 cannot easily conceive how any Gentleman of
 Reading could fall into such a Mistake. And
 indeed it is impossible to know what the *meer*
 Light of Nature could have found out, in
 Matters of *Religion*, unless we could find some
 Person or People, who were so *separated* from
 the Rest of the World, as that we could be
 sure they received Nothing from *Tradition* or
divine Revelation.

§ 58. It is certain that the ancient *Babylonians*,
Egyptians, &c. had some clear Knowledge of
 the Creation, the primitive State of Happiness,
 and especially of the Flood ; which historical
Facts they could not know, but by Tradition
 or Revelation. And so far as the Knowledge of
 these historical *Facts* grew *faint*, or was *dis-*
guised by Fables ; so far the Knowledge of the
 divine Perfections and moral Duties *failed* with
 it ;

* Euseb. Præparat. Evangel. Lib. xiii. C. xii.

it; inſomuch that ſeveral of the remoter Nations, as the *Hottentots* and the Inhabitants of *Madagascar*, had no *Idea of God at all*, until it was, of late Years, communicated to them by the *Europeans*; as is evident from fundry Authorities quoted by Mr. *Locke on human Underſtanding*, Book I. Chapter IV.

§ 59. I was well acquainted with a *Negro*, who was a Man of ſuperior *natural Powers* and made a Profeſſion of Religion, who told me that he was born in the Iſland of *Madagascar* and lived there till he was above thirty-four Years old; and in all that Time never had a Thought of the Being of a *God*, a *Creator*, or *Governor* of the World, or a *future State* after Death. Dr. *Williots*, in his Sermon on the *Light of Nature*, relates a Story of a Man in *France*, who was born *deaf* and dumb, yet was very knowing, active and faithful in the common Affairs of Life: and, upon a ſolemn Trial before the Biſhop, by the Help of thoſe who could con- verſe with him by Signs, was judged to be a *knowing* and *devout* Chriſtian, and admitted to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which he attended for many Years, with all the Signs of high Devotion, ſuch as Elevation of the Hands, Eyes, &c.: at length a large Quantity of hard Wax was taken out of his Ears; upon which he could hear; and, after a While, could ſpeak and read. He then declared, that 'while he was deaf, he had *no Idea* of a God, or Ma- ker of the World, or of a future State;' and

G

that

that 'all he then did, in Matters of Religion; was purely in Imitation of Others.'

§ 60. It is *possible* that a Man, by contemplating his *own Ideas*, the visible Works of *Creation*, and the Course of *Causes* and *Effects*, might, by Degrees, *find out* the Being and Perfections of God; but it is *probable* that he might live many Years, perhaps his whole *Life*, before his Thoughts would take much of a *Turn* upon these *invisible* and *metaphysical* Objects. But after these Things were suggested to him by *Others*, and he was set in *earnest* to reason upon them, he would find the most *clear* and *undoubted* Evidence of a *self-existent* and *eternal* Being. For there is a plain Distinction between a Man's *seeing the Evidence* of a Proposition, when it is fairly *proposed* to him by *another*, and his finding it out of *himself*, or suggesting it to his own Mind. Thus there are many important Truths in natural Philosophy and Mathematics, which, when they come to be fairly *proposed*, were never *doubted* of; such as the general Laws of Attraction, the Weight of the Atmosphere, Rules of Fluxions, &c. and yet it is probable that these Things never came into the Mind of any Mortal, till they were suggested by the great Genius of Sir *Isaac Newton*. Yea, there are some plain Truths, very useful to Mankind, in Surveying, Navigation, &c. such as that *The three Angles of a Triangle are equal to two right ones*; which probably never entered into the Mind of one Man in an Hundred, either by his *own* Suggestion, or by the Instruction of *Others*.

§ 61. As it is doubtful *how far* Men would have found out the Being and Perfections of God, if there never had been *any Kind of Revelation*; so it is more doubtful how far they would have found out *moral Duties*; any further than Experience would have taught them sundry Rules how to promote *Self-Interest*, and the common Happiness of the Community. Authors frequently speak of the *Law of Nature* as the great *fundamental* Principle of all *moral Duties*; and yet they give very different, if not contrary Definitions of it. The most ancient and most generally received Definition, is that in the *Jus Civile*, viz. *Jus naturale est quod Natura omnia Animalia docuit.* (a) *A Law which Nature has taught all Animals* (Man and Beast.) This Definition is confuted by Bp. Cumberland, who says that ‘by the Law of Nature, the best Civilians understand the *Law of Nations*’; (b) and he defines it to be ‘a Rule to promote the common Good, and the Happiness of particular Persons.’ (c) This Definition is confuted by the Author of the *Appendix*, before mentioned; and he defines it to be ‘a Law of the great Morals of Nature’s Institution.’ (d) And this, he says, is agreeable to the Sense of most Authors who have wrote upon it. And yet it seems a great *Impropriety* in Language and in Thought, to *feign* Nature to be a *Person*, vested with a *Capacity* and *Authority* to institute a Law for all Mankind; and

a Justiniani Institut. Lib. I. Tit. 11.

b Chap. V. Sec. 2. c Chap. V. Sec. 1. d Pag. 49.

and tends to mislead the Mind. And yet he says, in another Place, (e) that 'the Law of Nature is precisely the same with the *divine moral* Law, limited to those Things which are noticed by the *Light* of Nature.' But what those Things are, no Man has ever yet pretended to determine with any *clear Evidence*. Lord *Bolingbroke* says, that 'the Law of Nature is 'the Law of *Reason*.' (f) And I observe that whatever *fundamental Principle* any Man fixes upon, let it be what it will, he calls it by the Name of the *Law of Nature*.

§ 62. It is equally difficult to form any *precise* Idea of what is commonly called the *Religion of Nature*. It is generally understood to be certain Principles of Religion and Rules of Conduct, which the ancient *Heathen* Priests and Philosophers found out by the meer *Light of Nature*, without any Help from divine Revelation. But it is certain that they expressly *disclaimed* such a Guide; and, in Imitation of *Moses*, they ascribed all their religious Institutions to *divine Inspiration*. *Plato* says that 'all Laws came originally from divine Inspiration;' (g) that 'Virtue is not by *Nature*, but by a *divine Gift*.' (h) *Socrates* says, that 'Men become Good, as some become Prophets, not by *Nature*, but by divine Inspiration.' (i) *Homer* says that '*Minos*, the famous *Cretian* Law-giver,

e Pag. 163.

f Vol. 5. P. 83.

g. De Legibus and Minos.

h. Meno.

i Socrates

apud Aeschinẽm, Dial. I.

(z) M
nus ex
k Lel

giver, received his religious Institutions from Jupiter, by nine Years Conversation with him. Upon which Plato observes that Homer represents him as the greatest of all his Heroes; and that none would dare to oppose his Institutes. (z) Although this was a Fiction, yet it shews the universal Sense which the Philosophers, Priests, Law-givers, Poets and the common People had of the Insufficiency of the Light of Nature, and of the Necessity of a Revelation. All the Religions which were publicly established or practised in the World, were supposed or pretended to come originally from divine Inspiration; and all that was right and good in them, really did so, i. e. was taken, by Tradition, from the ancient Patriarchs or the Revelations made by Jehovah to Moses and the Prophets; though the Priests rather chose to ascribe them to those Gods who were best known to the common People, in order to gain greater Credit and Authority with them. † So that, as Dr. Leland justly observes, *There never was any such Thing as meer natural Religion, abstracting from all divine Revelation, professed in any Age, or in any Nation in the World.* (k) It is evident that all those modern Systems which are palmed upon us under the Title of the Religion of Nature, so far as they are right, are a Collection, from divine Revelation, of those Parts or Principles

(z) Minos. † Upon which Account Clemens Alexandrinus expressly calls them Thieves. *Stromata* Lib. I. & V.
 k Leland on deistical Writers, Vol. II. P. 344.

Principles of Religion which are most obvious to *human Reason*, or seem more immediately conducive to *Self-Interest*. (1) The Notions of the Light of Nature, which the deistical Writers have advanced, in order to undermine and supercede the Necessity of Christianity, are fully confuted by Dr. *Leland*, in his View of deistical Writers.

§ 63. Indeed some Men have attempted to prove, from Scripture, that the *Light of Nature* is sufficient for *Salvation*, and that there is *no Need* of divine Revelation ; particularly from Rom. i. 20. *The invisible Things of him, from the Creation of the World, are clearly seen ; being understood by the Things which are made ; even his eternal Power and Godhead.* I have before conceded, that when the Existence of God is once suggested to Men, and they are *led in earnest* to a due Contemplation of the Works of Creation, they would find the most *clear and incontestible* Evidence of the Being of a God. But then the Apostle no where asserts that Men, of their own *meer Motion* or Suggestion, would, in Fact, have come into such rational Inquiries, without those Notices and Suggestions which the *Heathen* generally had, from Tradition and divine Revelation. For God did not *leave himself without Witness* among the *Heathen*, in that the Light which he gave to the *Jewish Church*,
did,

See Discourses on this Subject by Dr. *Tho. Patten*, late Fellow of C. C. College, Oxon ; and Dr. *Abraham Taylor*, in the Lime-Street Sermons.

did, in so considerable a Measure, shine among them, in all successive Ages. And yet, notwithstanding all the Light they had, in all these Ways, they are expressly said *not to know God*, (m) i. e. not to have *such* a Knowledge of him, as is necessary in order to Salvation; which indeed the wisest of them acknowledged, by their Inscription on the Altar --- **TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.** (n) *Whom*, the Apostle says, *ye ignorantly worship; him I declare unto you.* They also urge that Text in Acts x. 34. *God is no Respector of Persons; but, in every Nation, he that feareth God and worketh Righteousness, is accepted of him.* But it is not said that any did so, by the *meer Light of Nature*, but rather in Consequence of their receiving divine Revelation. For these Words were spoken of *Cornelius*, who, though a *Roman Centurion*, was posted at *Joppa*, not fifty Miles from *Jerusalem*; where he had Opportunity to be well acquainted with the *Jewish Religion*, and probably with the Gospel; though, at first, under some imperfect and disadvantageous Representations; and therefore he needed better Instruction by the Apostle *Peter*, who was blamed, by some judaizing Christians, for preaching to the *Gentiles*, whom they, thro' a national Pride, were not willing to receive into the Christian Church. They also urge Rom. ii. 14. *The Gentiles which have not the Law, do, by Nature, the Things contained in the Law, --- which shew the Work of the Law written in their*

m 1 Thess. iv. 5.

n Acts xvii. 23.

52 *Natural Religion essentially defective*

their Hearts. But Mr. Pool, in his *Critics*, mentions it as the most probable Opinion, that the Apostle here speaks of the *converted Gentiles*; for which he quotes several of the best Commentators, who say this Sense is apparent from the whole Context: and they who suppose the Words may, in *some Sense*, be applied to the *unconverted Gentiles*; suppose that their Knowledge of the Law, extends no further than to leave them *inexcuseable* and *self-condemned*. Dr. Willliots, in his Sermon on this Text, says, that the Design of the Apostle is to convince the *judaising* Christians of their Error, in refusing to admit the *Gentile* Converts into their Communion: and tells them that the *Gentiles*, who had not the *Law of Moses* by *natural* Generation and Descent, as the *Jews* had; yet, upon their being *converted* to Christianity, did as fully keep the *divine Law*, as the *Jews*: which shews that the divine Law was *now written in their Hearts*, by the regenerating and sanctifying Influences of the Holy Spirit. And in this Sense, he says the Phrase *Law written in their Hearts*, is evidently used in the Prophecies of Gospel-Times; particularly Ser. 31. 33, 34. ‘ I will put my Law in their *inward Parts*, and *write my Law* in their *Hearts*, and they shall no more teach every Man his Neighbour,---for they shall all know me, from the greatest to the least.’ He concedes, that when God *at first* created Man, he wrote his Law upon his Heart; but, by the Fall, this Character is so obliterated, as that there

there is *now*, no *saving* Impression of it, unless it be *written* again, by the *renewing* Influences of the divine Spirit.

§ 64. But though Men, by the Light of Nature, might find out so much of the *moral Law* as is plainly coincident with *Self-Interest*, yet they could not possibly discover a *Mediator*, or *Satisfaction* for Sin, or any Way whereby a sinful Creature might obtain Reconciliation with an *offended God*. Indeed many have supposed that they could obtain a Pardon by the *meer Mercy* of God, without a Mediator or any Satisfaction; but this Supposition has arisen wholly from their Ignorance of the *Holiness* and *Justice* of the Divine Nature and *Law*, and so of the great *Evil* and just *Demerit* of Sin.

§ 65. Divine Revelation fully informs us, that our highest Duty and Obligation is to be LIKE TO GOD, and conformed to his moral Perfections: and the divine *Law* being a Transcript of the divine Nature, fully declares what Temper and Conduct in us, is a Conformity to that Standard. This is the principal, *leading Sentiment* which runs through the whole *Bible*. It is the Epitome of the *moral Law* delivered by *Moses*. Lev. xi. 44. *Ye shall therefore sanctify your Selves. Be ye holy, for I am holy.*--- So Chap. xix. 2. *Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.* This is again repeated in Chap. xx. 7. This is the Substance of the *moral Precepts* delivered by our blessed Saviour.

and the inspired Apostles. Matth. v. 48. *Be ye therefore perfect as your Father, which is in Heaven, is perfect. Be ye merciful as your Father which is in Heaven is merciful.* 1 Pet. i. 16. *Be ye holy, for I am holy. Be ye Followers of God (or Imitators of God) as dear Children.* --- As Man was at first made in the moral Image or Likeness to God, so the Recovery of that Image is his greatest Duty and highest Perfection. Coloss. iii. 10. *Put on the new Man which is renewed in Knowledge, after the Image or in Conformity to the Image, of him that created him.* So Ephes. iv. 16. *Put off the old Man, which is corrupt; and Be ye renewed in the Spirit of your Minds; and put on the new Man which after God is created in Righteousness and true Holiness.* 1 Cor. x. 31. *Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God; that is, that the glorious Perfections of the divine Nature might be exemplified and display'd in all your Conduct.* The moral Perfections of the eternal and self-existent Being, are the primary Foundation and Standard of all Perfection in the Creature; and to which he ought to be conformed, according to that Rank, Model, or Order in which he is placed in the Creation.

§ 66. Particularly,

1. Every rational Creature ought to be conformed to God, in his *Holiness*. Holiness is the moral Rectitude or Perfection of the divine Nature; and comprehends all that can be called or conceived of as good, right, amiable or excellent,

lent, of the *moral* Kind. The sacred Oracles fully explain and illustrate this comprehensive Perfection ; so far as the Knowledge of it can be conveyed by human Language ; and *special Illumination* gives a more clear and realizing Conception of it. (a)

2. In his *Justice*. Justice is a permitting every One to have or enjoy his *own* : or, it is a rendering to every One his *Due*, whether it be that *Good* or Happiness, or that *Misery* and Punishment which is *due* to him, or which he deserves, according to his Temper and Conduct.

3. In his *Goodness* ; which is a Disposition to *do Good* and communicate Happiness to other Beings, so far as is consistent with other Perfections.

4. In his *Truth* ; which is a Declaration in Words or Actions, of Things as they really are in themselves ; or, at least, as they appear to our Minds.

§ 67. These are the Elements of all that is morally good. And as every Duty is a necessary Consequence of an inward, *divine* Disposition of Mind ; so, from these divine Principles necessarily flow and result every *moral* Duty to *God*, our *Neighbour* and our *Selves*.---
I shall therefore, in the

Last

(a) *Sanctitas est Entis rationalis Bonitas moralis.*

Sanctitas est omnis Perfectionis Basis.

Sanctitas Dei est Excellentia ejus moralis.

56 *A Scheme of Duties ; to God ;*

Last Place, exhibit a brief and general Scheme of moral Virtues and Duties ;

- I. To God. As,
1. To *love* him. Love is a pleasing Approbation of any Object ; or such an Approbation of an Object, as is accompanied with Pleasure. And this arises both from the *Amiability* of the Object in itself ; and from a *similar* Disposition of Mind ; whereby a Person is disposed to approve of, to be pleased with, and delighted in such an Object. And as God is the most perfect, amiable and excellent Being, we ought to love him with all our Hearts and Souls ; and other Beings only so far as they bear a Resemblance to him, or for his Sake.
 2. To *fear* him. A Principle of Assimilation to God necessarily produces a *Fear* of doing any Thing which may gain his *Displeasure* or Disapprobation ; for this necessarily implies some Contrariety or Dissimilitude.
 3. To *trust* in him and depend upon him, in the Way of our Duty. This necessarily flows from a realizing View of the divine Perfections ; especially Wisdom, Power, and Goodness.
 4. To *worship* him. An *internal* Sense and Approbation of the divine Perfections, will necessarily exert and express itself in *external* Words and Actions ; which also have a Tendency to strengthen and increase the Sense and Habit of our own Minds, and to produce the same Disposition in the Minds of others.

5. To

5. To *repent* of Sin. A Mind which is, in the main, conformed to the moral Perfections of God, will necessarily be displeased with and hate every Thing which is contrary thereunto ; which will always be accompanied with a Grief and Sorrow ; especially as the Fault is within himself.

From this same Principle, all other Duties to God may, by the Assistance of divine Revelation, be easily deduced.

§ 68. II. Those Duties which more immediately respect our *Neighbours* or Mankind in general. The same divine Principle will dispose us to view *all Mankind* as the Creatures of God, originally made in his Image (and still retaining some Dispositions which may in some Respects be called good) as Fellow-Subjects to the same King, as Fellow-Servants of the same Lord ; and treat them according to the Rules of Justice, Goodness and Truth. Particularly,

1. We should *love* them. That is we should approve of and take Delight in what is good in them ; as it bears a Resemblance to some of the divine Perfections. We ought indeed to *hate* their bad Dispositions and Actions, but not their Persons : especially since we don't know, but that they may yet be the Objects of God's eternal Favour : We ought, at least, to love them with a *Love of Benevolence* : and endeavour to promote their temporal and eternal Happiness ; so far as is consistent with other Duties,
And

And that from a Principle of Obedience to God who has commanded us *to love our Neighbour as ourselves and to do good to all Men.* And for this Reason, because to do so, is to be *like to God* and the Children of our Father which is in Heaven.

2. We ought to conduct towards them according to *Justice.* We should never invade the Right and Property of another ; but freely permit him to use and enjoy whatsoever is his *own.* And that because we hereby act according to the Nature and Will of the supreme Proprietor of all Things ; who has commanded us to *render to every one his Due---to owe no Man any Thing ; and not to defraud or go beyond our Neighbour in any Matter.* And that because *the righteous Lord loveth Righteousness ; and that to do Justice is more acceptable than Sacrifice ; and that diverse Weights and diverse Measures are an Abomination to the Lord.*

And as to *punitive Justice,* or rendering to every Man that Misery or *Punishment* which is his due ; so far as any Man is, by the Word or Providence of God, made his Minister *to execute Wrath on him that doeth Evil,* he is bound to do it according to the *Justice and Law* of God, and those subordinate Rules which are given him to judge by.

3. We ought to observe *Truth* in all our Words and Declarations : so as never designedly to *deceive* our Neighbour. For Truth is an essential Perfection of God and cannot be infringed upon

upon by us, without a practical Denial that God is true. Deut. xxxii. 4. *He has stiled himself the God of Truth*; has commanded us to *speake the Truth*. Ephes. iv. 25. And has declared that *he hates a lying Tongue*.

4. Every Man ought to perform the Duties incumbent upon him as a *Member of Society*, or as resulting from the various Relations he stands in to others. From divine Institutions and human Compacts, various Relations arise, such as, Husband and Wife, Parents and Children, Magistrates and Subjects, Fellow-Citizens, or Members of lesser Communities having an equal Right with ourselves; from which many *Duties* do result, according to the Rules of Justice, Goodness and Truth; of which many Authors have treated largely and well: all which are to be observed in Conformity to the divine *Justice and Law*. *Render therefore to every one their Due. Fear to whom Fear, Honour to whom Honour, Tribute to whom Tribute, &c. Whatsoever Things ye would that others should do unto you, do ye the same to them.*

§ 69. III. Those Duties which more immediately relate to *ourselves*. From the same Principle of Justice and Goodness, every Man, considering himself as *one* of the Creatures of God; ought to endeavour to promote *his own* Happiness, as well as the Happiness of *others*; and therefore ought to cultivate and improve his rational Powers and moral Habits; to regulate the

66 *How far Duty and Interest coincide.*

the Appetites and Inclinations of his Body, so as to render it the most proper Organ of his Soul : and in general to promote his own Perfection and Happiness; so far as is consistent with those Duties which more immediately relate to God and his Fellow-Men : acting with a principal View of Conformity to the Perfections and Law of God ; and with a subordinate and additional Stimulous or Incitement of acting according to natural Inclination and Self-Interest : as a Means appointed by God more fully and effectually to incite him to do that which was his *antecedent* Duty. But to act upon this last Motive *alone*, without any Regard to the *former*, is to act upon a Principle very little superior to the brutal Instinct.

§. 70. This is a *short and general Scheme* of all the Duties incumbent upon Men, together with the *Foundation* of the Obligation they are under to perform them. Upon these Principles a Man may safely and profitably read the common Systems of *Ethics* ; which, though they are generally built upon wrong Foundations, yet the external Rules of Practice are generally *right and good*. For Self-Love, extended to a public View of Things (that is, the Interest which each Individual has in the publick Good) will, in most Instances, lead Men to the same Rules of external Conduct, as result from a Conformity to the divine Perfections. And since such a Conformity does naturally produce our own Good and Happiness, we may take the *inverse Method* ;

Method ; and, by observing what is most conducive to our *own Good*, may, in many Instances, find out what is agreeable to the *divine Perfections* ; tho' in a much more *uncertain* and imperfect Manner.

§ 71. For in this *inverse* Method of finding out our Duty, some Errors have crept into most Systems of *Ethics* ; and one which I apprehend to be very gross, viz. That, in many Cases, *it is lawful for Men to LYE* ; particularly to Persons who are not of *Years of Discretion* ; to those who are *sick, mad, or non compos Mentis* ; to *Enemies* ; and generally in all Cases where a Man can save himself or his Friend from any unreasonable Suffering. The Authors generally go upon this Principle, that the sole Criterion of *moral Good*, is *natural Good* or Happiness. That the Evil of Lying, in any Case, does not consist in *Contradiction to Truth* ; but in the *Injury* it does to others. Therefore it is *lawful to lye* in all Cases where no *Injury* accrues to any particular Person ; or, upon the Whole, more Good than Hurt. Some Authors (who think it is a little too *bare-faced*, or contrary to the common Sense of Mankind, to assert, in express Terms, that it is lawful to *lye*) say, that an *Untruth* or false Assertion, in such Cases, becomes *no Lye* ; or, if it is so called, yet it is *no Crime*. Mr. Grove, in his *Ethics*, Part II. Chap.

XI. says this is now become pretty generally the Sense of the learned World. (a)

§ 72. However consistent this Opinion may be with the Principles of these Authors, or how generally soever it may be received, yet it plainly appears to be contrary to the immutable *Truth* and *Law of God*. And I fully agree with the great Dr. *Ames*, that 'the Effence of a Lye
' consists in the *designed Falshood asserted*; and
' not barely in the *Injury* which attends it, tho'
' that is an Aggravation; and that 'every Lye
' is a Sin, abominable to God.' (b) Indeed it may be demonstrated that this Principle is contrary to Self-Interest, taken in a large extensive Sense, as including the Interest which each Individual has in the general Good of Mankind, for a long Course of Time. For this Opinion and Practice will necessarily destroy all Faith and Confidence among Men: and I never can believe a Man, in any Case where I can imagine that he can suppose it will be for his own or his Friend's immediate Interest to tell a Lye.

§ 73. But as every Man will run the Venture of his own Interest as he pleases; I think we can build upon no certain Foundation in Morality,

(a) See Grotius de Jure Pacis & Belli, Liber III. Cap. 1. Puffendorf de Jure Naturæ & Gentium Observat. 250. In Eng. Book IV. Chap. 1.

(b) Amesii Medulla Lib. II. Cap. 21. De Conscientiæ Casibus, Lib. V. Cap. 53.

lity, but the *divine Perfections and Law*. Truth is an *eternal, immutable and inflexible* Perfection of the divine Nature ; and cannot be limited, even in our Conceptions, by any other Perfections : as the Exercise of the divine Power seems to be limited by Wisdom ; but it never can be *wise* in God to act contrary to his own *Truth*. A Conformity therefore to this Attribute, must be *perfect* and without Exception ; and no Fault of our own or others, can give us a Dispensation, in *any Case* to act contrary to it. The divine Law, in this Case, is absolute and without any Limitation. Ephes. iv. 25. *Put away Lying. Speak the Truth every Man to his Neighbour.* 1 Thes. iv. 6. *Let no Man go beyond, or defraud, his Neighbour, in ANY MATTER ; for God is the Avenger of such.*

§ 74. As to the Instances of *approved Deception* pretended to be found in *Scripture* ; they are all easily solved by this one *Distinction*. There is a plain Distinction between my asserting a Proposition which is *false* ; and my asserting a Proposition which is *true*, and another thro' a Mistake, not of my Proposition, as it is really intended by me, but of some relative Circumstances, draws a *false Inference* from what I said. In this Case he *deceives himself*, thro' his own Rashness and Want of Consideration. And if it be in a Case in which I am under no Kind of *Obligation* to tell him the
whole

whole Truth, or every Truth which has any remote *Relation* to what I said ; then it is no Fault in me, to *let him alone*, to deceive himself. And that even though, by knowing his Disposition, I *expected* before-hand, that he would make such a *wrong Inference*. But if I was under *any Obligation*, by the divine Law, my own Promise or otherwise, to tell him the *whole* Truth in that Matter, and do not ; then indeed I am guilty of a *great Fault* by my Neglect : but that alone does not constitute a Lye in the first Proposition. But then my Assertion must be in plain and express Words, which being taken according to the *common Use* of Language, or other known *instituted Signs*, shall *truly* convey my Ideas. For if I use any Kind of *Equivocations* or mental Reservations, with a Design that he should *misunderstand* me, then I *deceive him*, and that in such a Manner as is but little, if any Thing better than a *plain Lye*. But if he, from *my Words*, takes up the true Proposition, as it was contained in *my Mind* ; and then inconsiderately draws a *false Inference* from it, and acts accordingly ; he deceives *himself* and not *I*.

§ 75. As suppose, I see a *Madman* with a Sword in his Hand, pursuing another, who is at present out of Sight ; and I tell him, that four Minutes ago I saw him go into such a House, and he thereupon supposes, that he is there *now*,
and

and accordingly goes in there to seek him : and I don't tell the Madman that I afterwards saw him come out, and go another Way : this is no *Lye* or *Deception* in me ; for I told him the *Truth*, and the whole *Truth*, so far as I was obliged or undertook to do it : and what followed was his *mistaken Inference* from the *Truth* which I told him. Indeed if he had asked me if I believed that he was there *now*, and I had answered *Yes*, I should have been guilty of *Lying*. But then I might have refused to give him any Answer at all, without any Violation of Truth.

§ 76. So in *Stratagems in War* : if I retreat or flee before my Enemy ; and from this Action he infers that I am beat, discouraged, or will *fight no more* : and so pursues me with Precipitation, and gives me an Advantage against him ; and then I turn back and take it, as I before *designed*, I am guilty of no *Lye* or active *Deception* : I only let him alone to *deceive himself*, by not revealing to him a Truth which I was under no Obligation to discover. But if I strike my Colours, hold up a Flag of Truce, or use any other known, *instituted* Sign of Submission or Cessation of Arms ; and he thereupon comes to me unarmed ; and I fall upon him and kill him ; I am guilty of perfidious *Lying* and *Murder* ; because I acted contrary to my *own* Declaration.

§ 77. This Distinction and Rule is plain : all the Danger in the Application of it will be this ;

— a Man, in some Cases, may think himself *not oblig'd* to discover a Truth, when he really is obliged, from the Principles of Justice, Truth or Goodness. But a precise Determination of the Boundaries of Obligation, in all such Cases, would require considerable Time, and does not belong to the present Question. Upon the whole therefore it appears, that a Man ought not, in ANY Case, or under any Circumstances whatsoever, knowingly to *declare* or *assert* any Proposition or Thing which is a *Lye, false* or *untrue* : and if he does, he contradicts and implicitly denies the *Truth* and Law of God.

These Things, duly considered, will be sufficient to direct us how to distinguish between the *justifiable* and *unjustifiable* Instances of *seeming* or *supposed Deception*, recorded in the sacred Scripture.

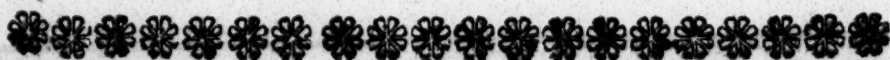
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ERRATA.

Page 22, L. 24, read § 34. III.

Page 25, L. 14, read § 36. IV.



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